THE HUMAN FLY™
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THE WILDEST SUPER-HERO EVER--BECAUSE HE'S REAL!
THE HUMAN FLY™
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THE FLY AND THE WHITE TIGER TEAM TO SAVE A PARALYZED CITY AND STOP THE SINISTER COPPERHEAD!
BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH
DOOMSDAY DAWNS AT NIGHT!
EXTRA SPECIAL GUEST STAR: DAREDEVIL!

One night in 1971, on a lonely North Carolina highway, a head-on *car crash* cost a young driver his family—and, very nearly, his *life!* Hardly a bone in his body remained *unbroken*. His doctors were *sure* that he would never *move* again... But he *triumphed* over his disability and went on to become the *wildest hero* of all—because he's *REAL!*

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE HUMAN FLY!

BILL MANTLO WRITER / FRANK ROBBINS ARTIST / MIKE ESPOSITO INKER / JOHN COSTANZA, MARY TITUS letters, colors / ARCH GOODWIN EDITOR

WHEN COPPERHEAD ATTEMPTED TO STEAL A PRICELESS ANCIENT URN FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART BY FLOATING IT DOWN A FLOODED, ABANDONED SUBWAY TUNNEL--HE GOT MORE THAN HE BARGAINED FOR!
HE GOT THE HUMAN FLY... THE WILDEST STUNTMAN-EVER!
AND THE WHITE TIGER... THE WORLD'S FIRST HISPANIC SUPER-HERO!
HAHAHAHAHAHA
AND WELL MIGHT COPPERHEAD LAUGH FOR, AS THE FLY, HIS CREW AND THE CHILDREN IN HIS CARE FACE A WATERY DOOM--
--THE WHITE TIGER GASPS OUT HIS LAST BREATH... TWO POISONED DARTS IN HIS CHEST! THUS, TWO HEROES HAVE ALREADY FAILED TO STOP THE RE-INCARNATED COPPERHEAD...

...and DAREDEVIL makes THREE!

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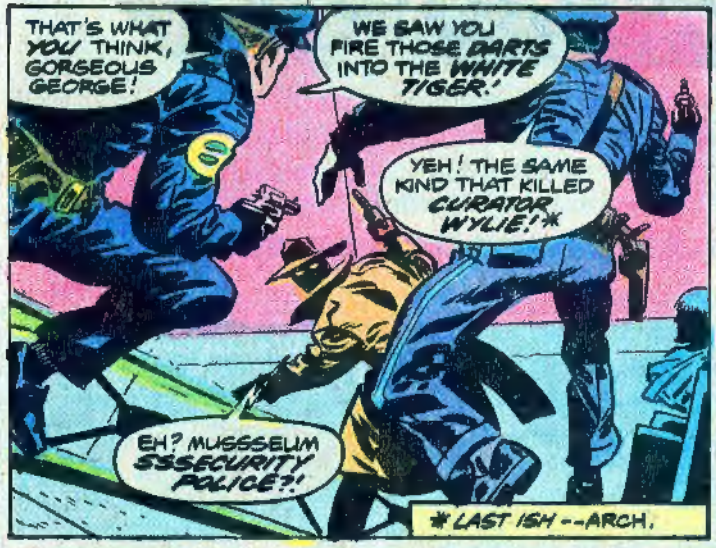
A MrBC Scan

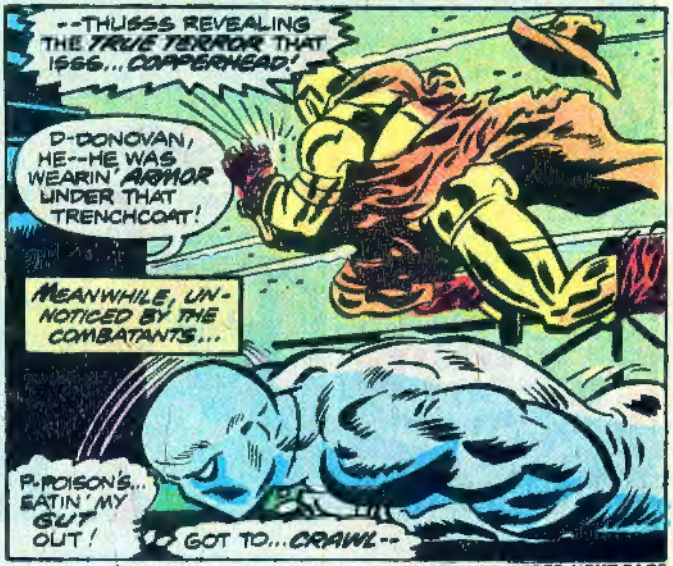
AS THE WATERS RISE IN THE TUNNEL BELOW THE MUSEUM...
M-MISTER FLY,, WHAT ARE WE GONNA D-DO?!
JUST STAY CALM, SON! THERE MUST BE A WAY OUT OF THIS!
IT'S THE WATER AND THE DARKNESS THAT'S PANICKING THEM, FLY!
IF ONLY WE COULD GET THE CHILDREN ABOVE THE FLOOD...
WE CAN, SEÑORITA MERCADO --BY LIFTING THEM UP TO THE DAIS UPON WHICH THE URN RESTS!
*A MUSEUM CURATOR, INTRODUCED LAST ISH. --ARCHIE.
ALL RIGHT, KIDS! YOU HEARD THE FLY!
S-SEÑORITA MERCADO, I--I'M AWFUL SCARED!
SO AM I, NIÑA-- BUT WE MUST TRUST IN THE FLY!
THERE YOU GO, ADAM! JUST SIT TIGHT!
SEÑOR FLY, I TRY TO BELIEVE IN MY OWN WORDS OF CONFIDENCE, BUT--
--WHAT DO WE DO IF THE WATERS CONTINUE TO RISE?
WE WORRY ABOUT THAT WHEN IT HAPPENS, SEÑORITA--
--AND WE PRAY, IN THE MEAN-TIME, THAT IT DOESN'T!
BUT IT SEEMS IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN PRAYERS TO STOP THE INEXORABLY RISING TIDE--
--THAT NOW LAPS FRIGHTENINGLY CLOSE AT THEIR FEET!

WHILE, IN THE MUSEUM GALLERY ABOVE...
THE URN BELONGSSS TO COPPERHEAD--AND ALL WHO HAVE TRIED TO SSSTOP ME--
KLIK
--ARE DYING OR ALREADY DEAD!
AND, WITH BUT A TWISSST OF MY SSSCULPTED FRIEND--

--THE MECHANICSSS OF MY THEFT ARE UNDETECTABLY ERASSED!
THE SSSPOT WHENCE SSSTOOD THE URN IS SSSEALED...WITHOUT A TRACE!
NOW COPPERHEAD ISSS FREE TO PURSSSUE THE NEXT PHASSSE OF HISSS PLANSSS!

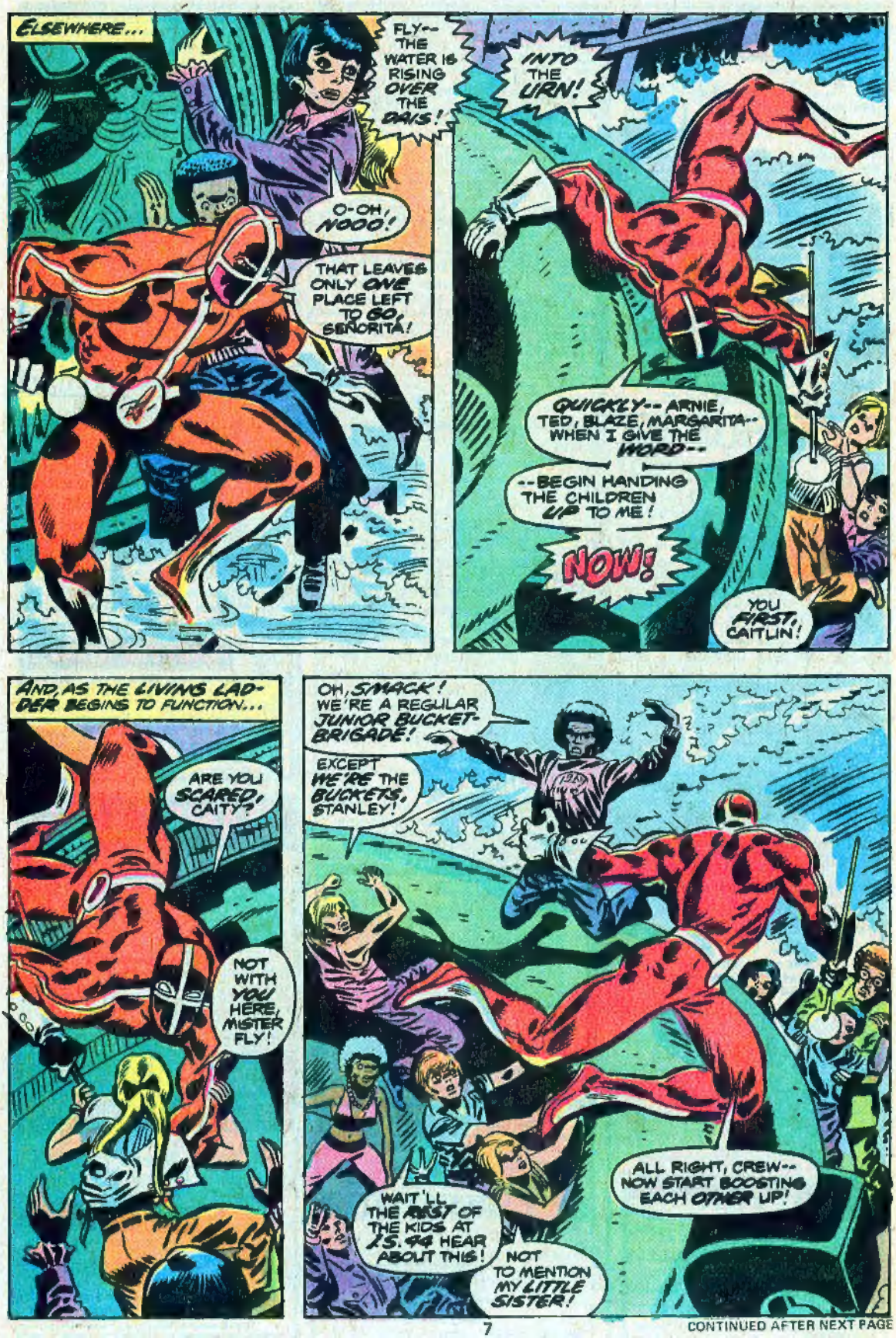

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, GORGEOUS GEORGE!
WE SAW YOU FIRE THOSE DARTS INTO THE WHITE TIGER!
YEH! THE SAME KIND THAT KILLED CURATOR WYLIE!*
EH? MUSSSEUM SSSECURITY POLICE?!
* LAST ISH --ARCH.

YOU KNOW IT, MISTER! YOU HAD US CHASIN' THE TIGER, WHILE THE REAL KILLER ALL ALONG--
--WAS YOU!
WATCH IT, DONOVAN! HE'S UP TO SOMETHING!
PTOW
BLAM


--THUSSS REVEALING THE TRUE TERROR THAT ISSS...COPPERHEAD!
D-DONOVAN, HE--HE WAS WEARIN' ARMOR UNDER THAT TRENCHCOAT!
MEANWHILE, UNNOTICED BY THE COMBATANTS...
P-POISON'S... EATIN' MY GUT OUT!
GOT TO...CRAWL--

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

--S-GET AWAY FROM THE WAR-ZONE--
WOK
UNGHH!
--TRY TO S-STAY AWAKE WHILE THE TIGER AMULET THAT M-MAKES ME WHAT I AM--
--T-TRIGGERS THE CHANGE!
THERE IS A SUDDEN FLASH OF LIGHT THAT GOES UNNOTICED IN THE CHAOS...
NOW DO YOU UNDER-SSSTAND, FOOLESS--
--THAT COPPERHEAD CANNOT BE BEATEN?!
WRAM
WRAP
¿Q-QUE--I-I'M HECTOR AYALA AGAIN! THE TIGER'S GONE, AND THE POISON THAT WAS KILLIN' HIM HAS SOMEHOW BEEN NUETRALIZED BY THE CHANGE!
BUT THERE'S STILL SENOR COPPER-HEAD--
STOP, ASESINO! NOT THAT LA POLICIA ARE AMIGOS OF MINE--
LIBERTAD
--BUT THAT DOESN'T GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO BEAT THEM TO PULP!
EH? WHO DARESSS--?!


ELSEWHERE...
FLY--THE WATER IS RISING OVER THE DAIS!
O-OH, NOOO!
THAT LEAVES ONLY ONE PLACE LEFT TO GO, SEÑORITA!
INTO THE URN!
QUICKLY-- ARNIE, TED, BLAZE, MARGARITA-- WHEN I GIVE THE WORD--
--BEGIN HANDING THE CHILDREN UP TO ME!
NOW!
YOU FIRST, CAITLIN!
AND, AS THE LIVING LADDER BEGINS TO FUNCTION...
ARE YOU SCARED, CAITY?
NOT WITH YOU HERE, MISTER FLY!
OH, SMACK! WE'RE A REGULAR JUNIOR BUCKET-BRIGADE!
EXCEPT WE'RE THE BUCKETS, STANLEY!
ALL RIGHT, CREW-- NOW START BOOSTING EACH OTHER UP!
WAIT'LL THE REST OF THE KIDS AT I.S. 94 HEAR ABOUT THIS!
NOT TO MENTION MY LITTLE SISTER!

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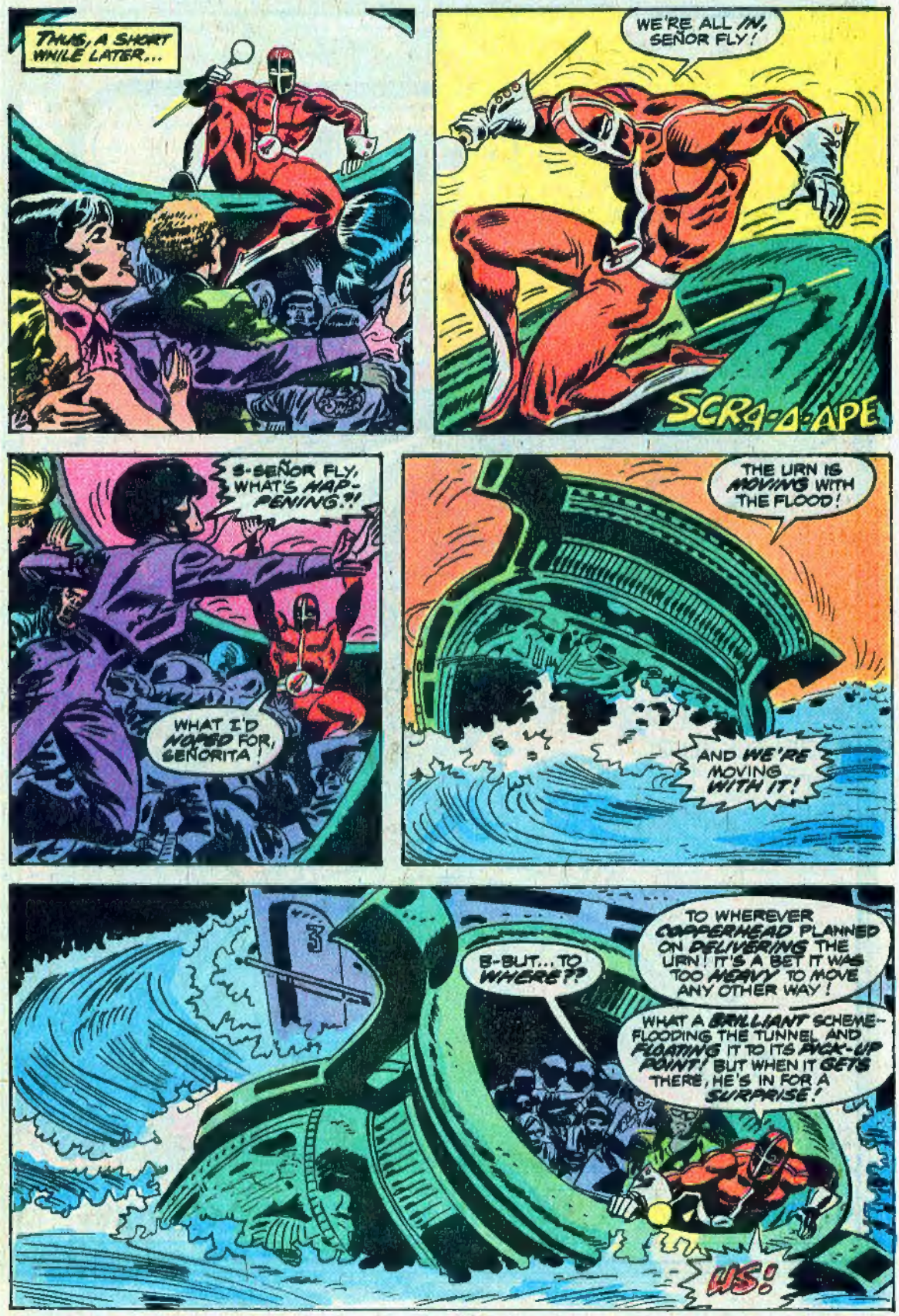
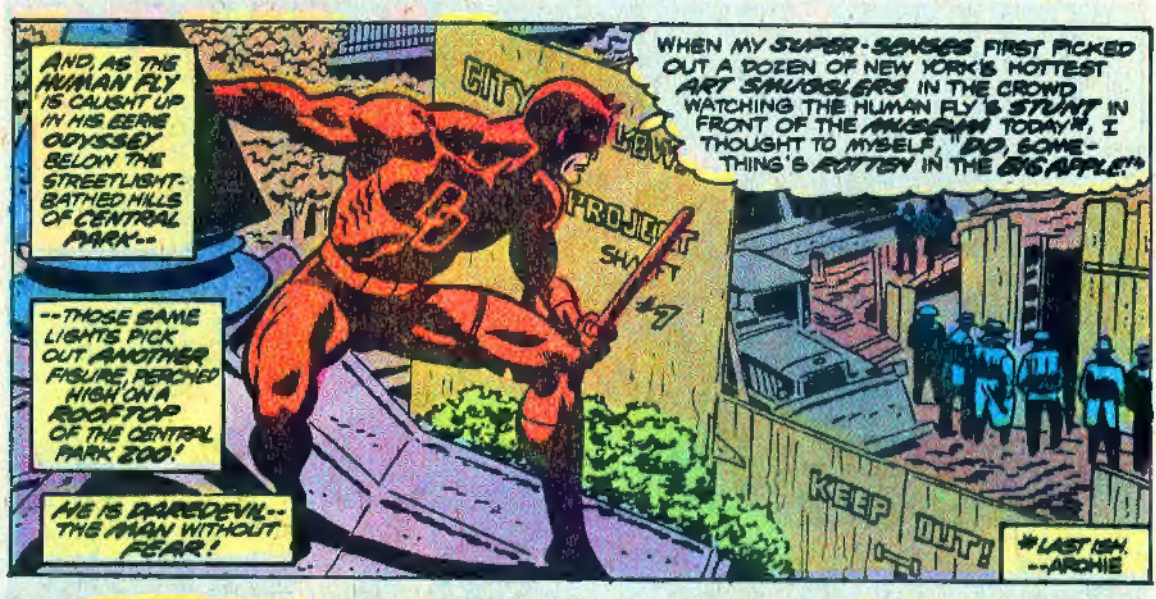
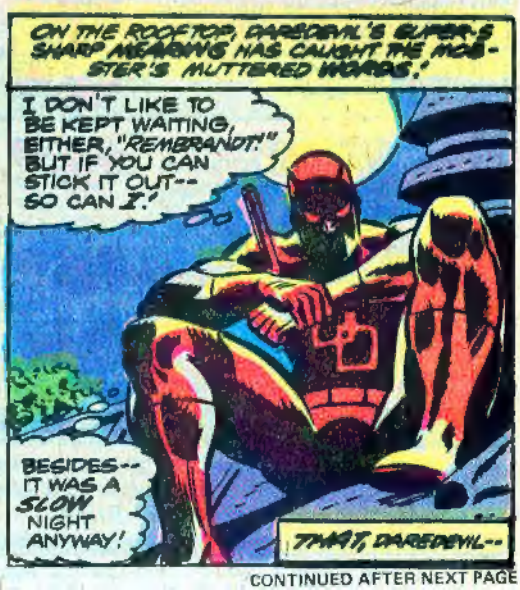

THUS, A SHORT WHILE LATER...
WE'RE ALL IN, SEÑOR FLY!
SCRA-A-APE
S-SEÑOR FLY, WHAT'S HAP-PENING?!
WHAT I'D NOPED FOR, SEÑORITA!
THE URN IS MOVING WITH THE FLOOD!
AND WE'RE MOVING WITH IT!
TO WHEREVER COPPERHEAD PLANNED ON DELIVERING THE URN! IT'S A BET IT WAS TOO HEAVY TO MOVE ANY OTHER WAY!
B-BUT... TO WHERE?!
WHAT A BRILLIANT SCHEME- FLOODING THE TUNNEL AND FLOATING IT TO ITS FUCK-UP POINT! BUT WHEN IT GETS THERE, HE'S IN FOR A SURPRISE!
US!


AND, AS THE HUMAN FLY IS CAUGHT UP IN HIS EERIE ODYSSEY BELOW THE STREETLIGHT-BATHED HILLS OF CENTRAL PARK--
--THOSE SAME LIGHTS PICK OUT ANOTHER FIGURE, PERCHED HIGH ON A ROOFTOP OF THE CENTRAL PARK ZOO!
HE IS DAREDEVIL--THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!
WHEN MY SUPER-SENSES FIRST PICKED OUT A DOZEN OF NEW YORK'S HOTTEST ART SMUGGLERS IN THE CROWD WATCHING THE HUMAN FLY'S STUNT IN FRONT OF THE MUSEUM TODAY, I THOUGHT TO MYSELF, "DO, SOMETHING'S ROTTEN IN THE BIG APPLE!"
CITY
PROJECT
SHAFT
#7
KEEP OUT!
#LAST ISH.
--ARCHIE

SO I FOLLOWED THEM, BUT INSTEAD OF GOING INTO THE MUSEUM, AS I WOULD HAVE EXPECTED--
--THEY CAME HERE! TO AN OPEN-SHAFT CONSTRUCTION SITE THAT'S PART OF THE CITY'S NEW SUBWAY EXTENSION! WHY?


ON THE ROOFTOP, DAREDEVIL'S SUPER-SHARP HEARING HAS CAUGHT THE MOBSTER'S MUTTERED WORDS.
I DON'T LIKE TO BE KEPT WAITING, EITHER, "REMBRANDT!" BUT IF YOU CAN STICK IT OUT--SO CAN I.
BESIDES--IT WAS A SLOW NIGHT ANYWAY!
THAT, DAREDEVIL--

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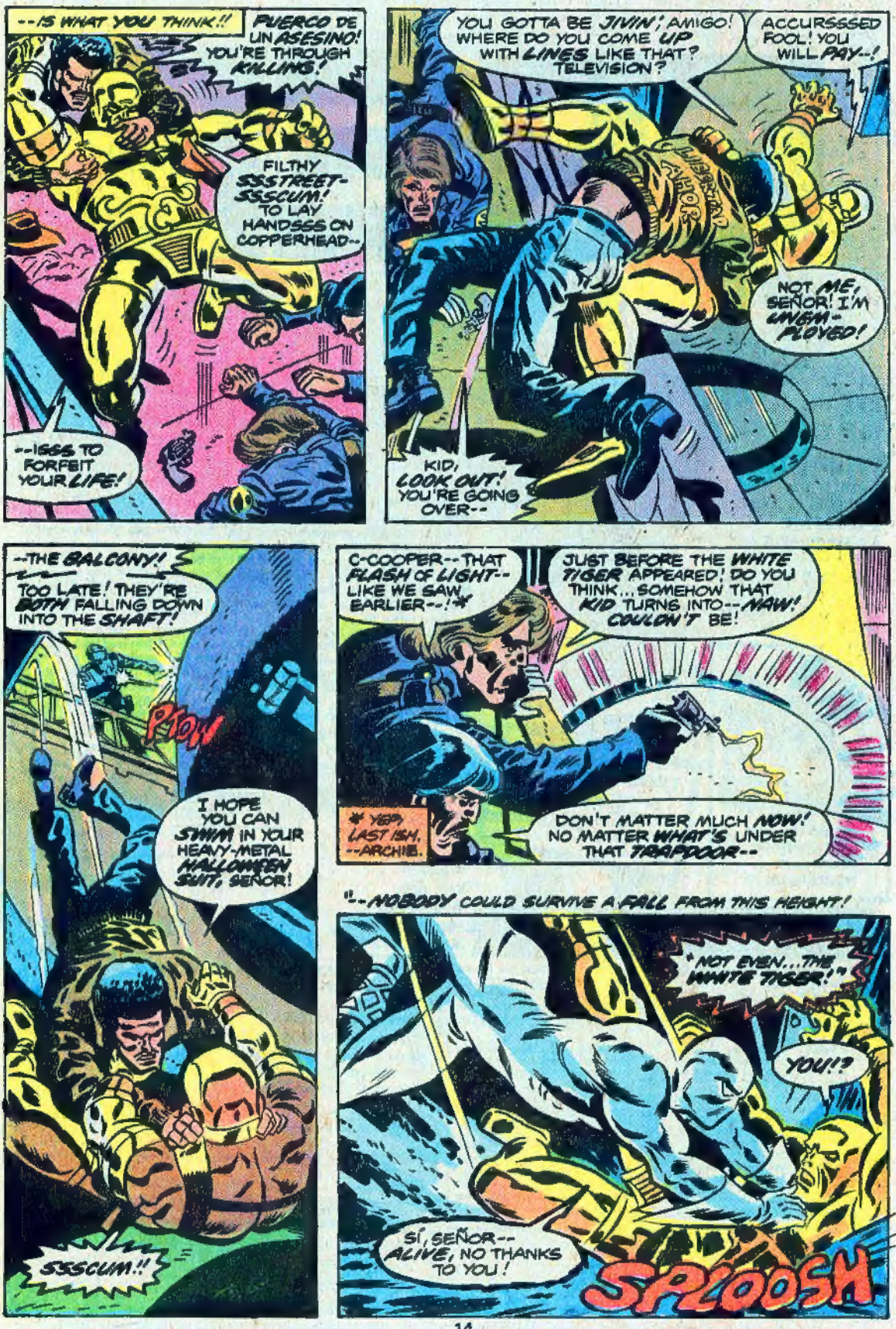
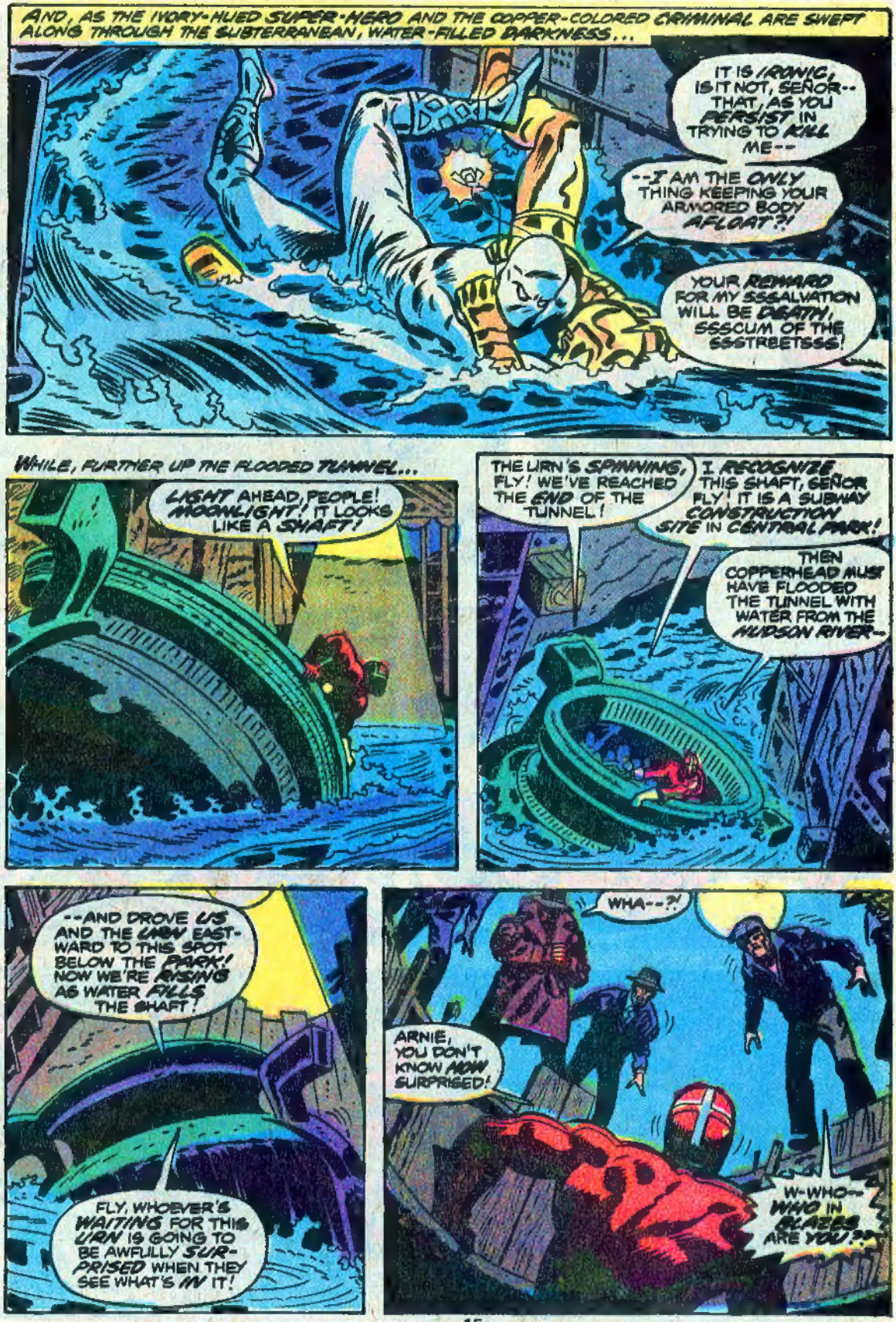

--IS WHAT YOU THINK!!
PUERCO DE UN ASESINO! YOU'RE THROUGH KILLING!
FILTHY SSSTREET-SSSCUM! TO LAY HANDSSS ON COPPERHEAD--
--ISSS TO FORFEIT YOUR LIFE!
YOU GOTTA BE JIVIN', AMIGO! WHERE DO YOU COME UP WITH LINES LIKE THAT? TELEVISION?
ACCURSSSED FOOL! YOU WILL PAY--!
NOT ME, SEÑOR! I'M UNEMPLOYED!
KID, LOOK OUT! YOU'RE GOING OVER--
--THE BALCONY!
TOO LATE! THEY'RE BOTH FALLING DOWN INTO THE SHAFT!
PTOW!
I HOPE YOU CAN SWIM IN YOUR HEAVY-METAL HALLOWEEN SUIT, SEÑOR!
SSSCUM!!
C-COOPER--THAT FLASH OF LIGHT--LIKE WE SAW EARLIER--!
JUST BEFORE THE WHITE TIGER APPEARED! DO YOU THINK... SOMEHOW THAT KID TURNS INTO--NAW! COULDN'T BE!
* YEP. LAST ISH. --ARCHIE.
DON'T MATTER MUCH NOW! NO MATTER WHAT'S UNDER THAT TRAPDOOR--
"--NOBODY COULD SURVIVE A FALL FROM THIS HEIGHT!
"NOT EVEN...THE WHITE TIGER!"
YOU!?
SÍ, SEÑOR--ALIVE, NO THANKS TO YOU!
SPLOOSH

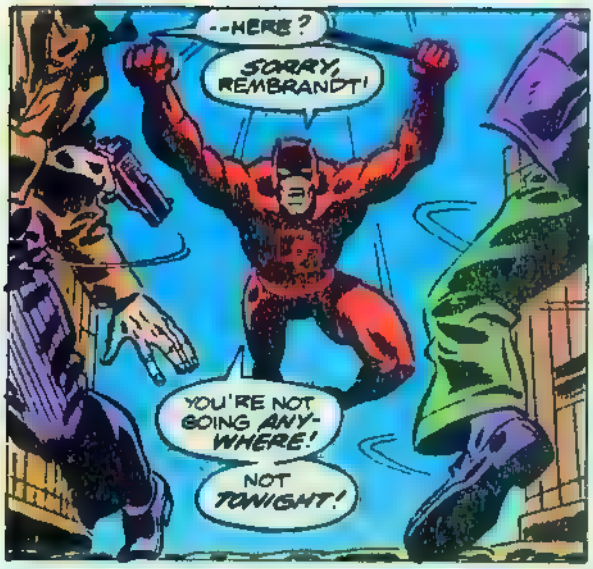

AND, AS THE IVORY-HUED SUPER-HERO AND THE COPPER-COLORED CRIMINAL ARE SWEPT ALONG THROUGH THE SUBTERRANEAN, WATER-FILLED DARKNESS...
IT IS IRONIC, IS IT NOT, SEÑOR-- THAT, AS YOU PERSIST IN TRYING TO KILL ME--
--I AM THE ONLY THING KEEPING YOUR ARMORED BODY AFLOAT?!
YOUR REWARD FOR MY SSSALVATION WILL BE DEATH, SSSCUM OF THE SSSTREETSSS!
WHILE, FURTHER UP THE FLOODED TUNNEL...
LIGHT AHEAD, PEOPLE! MOONLIGHT! IT LOOKS LIKE A SHAFT!
THE URN'S SPINNING, FLY! WE'VE REACHED THE END OF THE TUNNEL!
I RECOGNIZE THIS SHAFT, SEÑOR FLY! IT IS A SUBWAY CONSTRUCTION SITE IN CENTRAL PARK!
THEN COPPERHEAD MUST HAVE FLOODED THE TUNNEL WITH WATER FROM THE HUDSON RIVER--
--AND DROVE US AND THE URN EASTWARD TO THIS SPOT BELOW THE PARK! NOW WE'RE RISING AS WATER FILLS THE SHAFT!
FLY, WHOEVER'S WAITING FOR THIS URN IS GOING TO BE AWFULLY SURPRISED WHEN THEY SEE WHAT'S IN IT!
WHA--?!
ARNIE, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW SURPRISED!
W-WHO-- WHO IN BLAZES ARE YOU?!

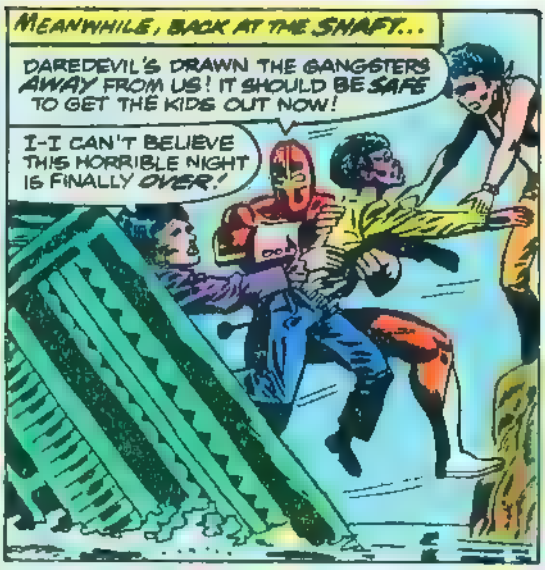
STAY BEHIND ME, KIDS -- AND STAY DOWN UNTIL I FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON!
I'M CALLED THE HUMAN FLY, GENTLEMEN! AS FOR WHAT I AND THESE CHILDREN ARE DOING IN THIS URN--
--THAT'S A BIT MORE COMPLICATED, I'M AFRAID!
CRIPES! WHAT A MESS!
YOU SAID IT! WE CAN'T HAVE NO WITNESSES! WE GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO PLUG 'EM!
NOT ON YOUR LIFE, GUNSEL!
WHO IN--!?
DARE-DEVIL!
APPEND THAT, "REMBRANDT!" IT'S DAREDEVIL, THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!
POW
SWAT
DRILL HIM, YA MONKEYS!
SPAK KRAK SPLOW
KIDS, CREW-- EVERY-BODY, STAY DOWN!!
AIN'TCHA GONNA HELP DAREDEVIL, MISTER FLY??
NO! I ALREADY TOLD YOU BACK IN THE MUSEUM, STANELY-- THAT I'M NOT CRIME-FIGHTER!
BESIDES-- DAREDEVIL LOOKS LIKE HE'S DOING JUST FINE ALL BY HIMSELF!

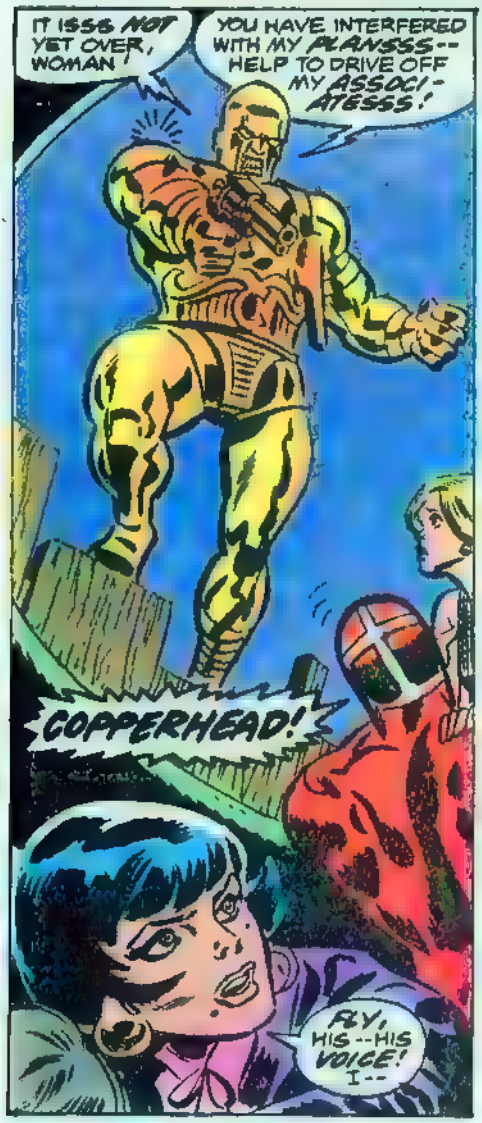
WHICH IS MORE THAN CAN BE SAID FOR THE WHITE TIGER!
A FEW MOMENTSSS WITHOUT AIR AND YOUR SSSTRUGGLESSS GROW WEAK, WHITE TIGER!
AH, LISAT! WE HAVE SSSURFACED AT MY DESSSTINATION!
THE SCENT OF TREES--OF CAGED ANIMALS...THE CENTRAL PARK ZOO!
UNNGHH!
WTRUNG
UNHAND ME, SSSCUM! I HAVE NO FURTHER USSSE FOR YOU!
SSSO SSSWIK BENEATH THE DARK WATERSSS, WHITE TIGER!
COPPERHEAD HASSS BUSSSINESSS TO ATTEND TO!
IT'S NOT THAT EASY, SEÑOR!
AN ANGRY WHITE TIGER SILENTLY STALKS AFTER HIS PREY--
--WHILE...
THAT'S RIGHT, BOYS! SCURRY OFF INTO THE DARK LIKE THE RATS YOU ARE!
YEAH? WELL JUST YOU COME AFTER US, HORNHEAD--
--AN' YOU'LL BE A SPORTIN' MORE HOLES THAN A PIECE OF SWISS CHEESE!

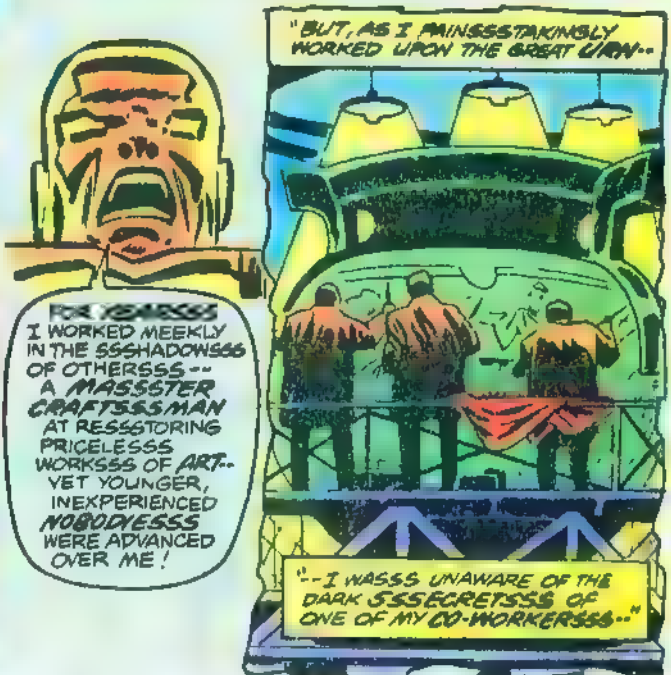
CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

"GRIFTER" SNITCH, ISN'T IT? WELL--
--AFTER A HACKNEYED LINE LIKE THAT ONE--
--YOU OUGHT TO BE GRATEFUL THAT I DON'T PUT YOU AWAY PERMANENTLY!
U-ULP! WOTTA YA DOIN' WITH M-ME?!
YEEOWW! NO-- NOT THERE! Y-YA CAN T' IT'S MOIDER!
DON'T BE SO MELO-DRAMATIC! DIDN'T YOU READ THE SIGN ON THE FENCE?
IT'S ONLY BEEN A COUPLE OF HOURS SINCE FEEDING TIME! HE CAN'T BE TOO HUNGRY!
ROWR
M-M-M-M-M-M-M-M--
--MOANAN!
A WORD OF ADVICE, SNITCH-- START CLIMBING!
"REMBRANDT"! UP THERE, BY THE CLOCK!
BRING HIM DOWN, ACE! I WANT HIS HORNS!
BLAM BLAM
WATCH THIS NEXT TRICK CLOSELY, BOYS! I CALL IT MY--
"--VANISHING ACT!"
WH-WHERE'D HE GO?!
HE--HE JUST SORTA... DISAPPEAR-ED--INTO THE SHADOWS!
AN' THE REST OF THE MUGS'VE RUN OUT ON US! C'MON, ACE--LET'S GET OUT OF--




MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE SHAFT...
DAREDEVIL'S DRAWN THE GANGSTERS AWAY FROM US! IT SHOULD BE SAFE TO GET THE KIDS OUT NOW!
I-I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS HORRIBLE NIGHT IS FINALLY OVER!


IT ISSS NOT YET OVER, WOMAN!
YOU HAVE INTERFERED WITH MY PLANSSS-- HELP TO DRIVE OFF MY ASSOCI-ATESSS!
COPPERHEAD!
HEY, HIS--HIS VOICE! I--


"BUT, AS I PAINSSSTAKINGLY WORKED UPON THE GREAT URN--
FOR YEARSSS I WORKED MEEKLY IN THE SSSHADOWSSS OF OTHERSSS-- A MASSSTER CRAFTSSSMAN AT RESSSTORING PRICELESSS WORKSSS OF ART-- YET YOUNGER, INEXPERIENCED NOBODYESSS WERE ADVANCED OVER ME!
"--I WASSS UNAWARE OF THE DARK SSSECRETSSS OF ONE OF MY CO-WORKERSSS--"

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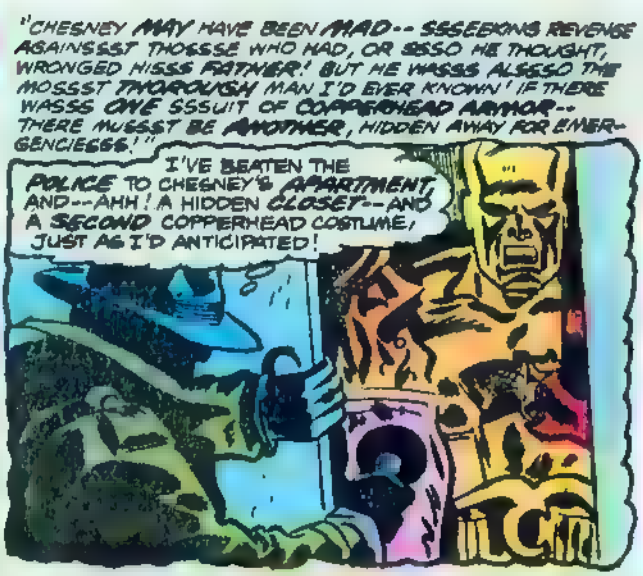
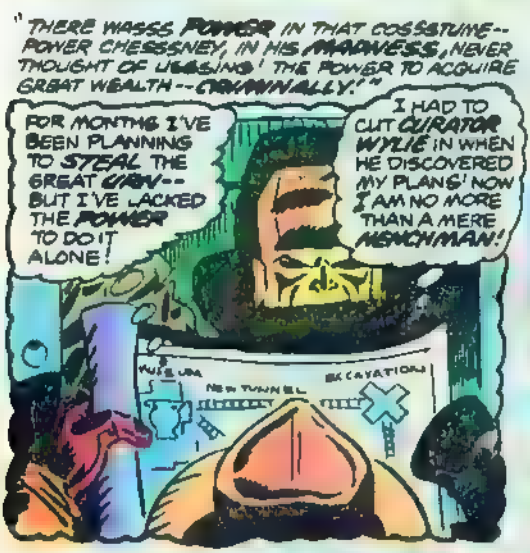
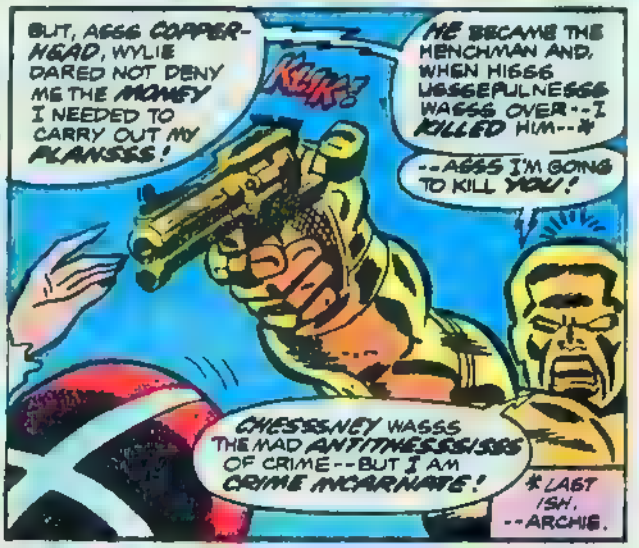
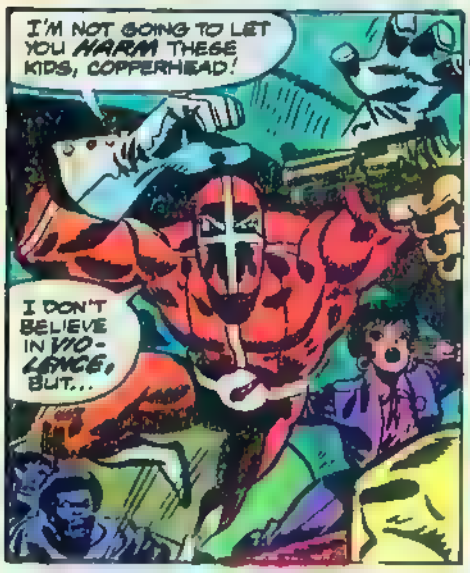
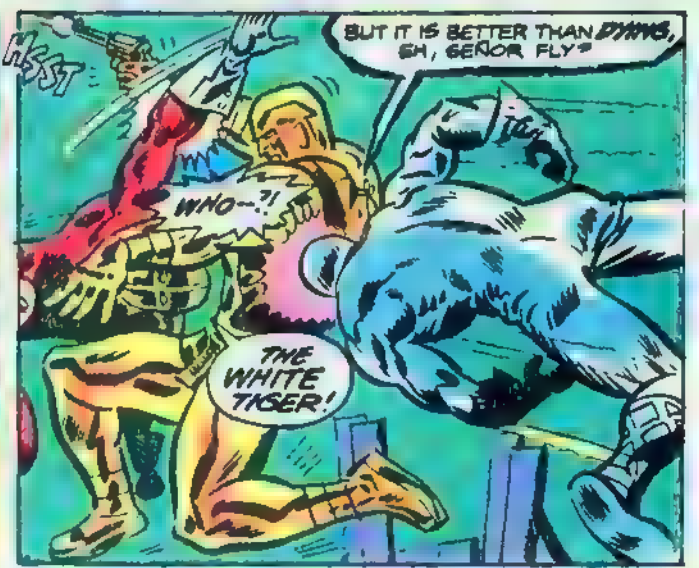
--UNTIL THAT WORKER SSS DEATH, WHEN HE WASSS REVEALED AGGG...
COPPERHEAD! THE SAME LAWRENCE CHESNEY WHO WORKED SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH ME IN THE MUSEUM--
--A PSYCHOTIC KILLER!
DAILY CHRONICLE
COPPERHEAD DEAD


"CHESNEY MAY HAVE BEEN MAD-- SSSEEKING REVENGE AGAINSSST THOSSSE WHO HAD, OR SSSO HE THOUGHT, WRONGED HISSS FATHER! BUT HE WASSS ALSSSO THE MOSSST THOROUGH MAN I'D EVER KNOWN! IF THERE WASSS ONE SSSUIT OF COPPERHEAD ARMOR-- THERE MUSSST BE ANOTHER, HIDDEN AWAY FOR EMERGENCIESSS!"
I'VE BEATEN THE POLICE TO CHESNEY'S APARTMENT, AND--AHH! A HIDDEN CLOSET--AND A SECOND COPPERHEAD COSTUME, JUST AS I'D ANTICIPATED!

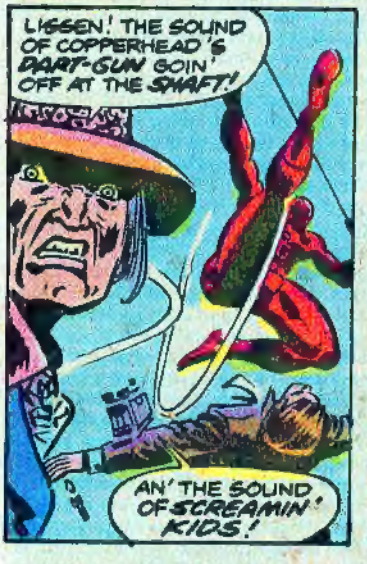

"THERE WASSS POWER IN THAT COSSTUME-- POWER CHESSNEY, IN HIS MADNESS, NEVER THOUGHT OF USSSING! THE POWER TO ACQUIRE GREAT WEALTH--CRIMINALLY!"
FOR MONTHS I'VE BEEN PLANNING TO STEAL THE GREAT URN-- BUT I'VE LACKED THE POWER TO DO IT ALONE!
I HAD TO CUT CURATOR WYLIE IN WHEN HE DISCOVERED MY PLANS! NOW I AM NO MORE THAN A MERE HENCHMAN!
NEW TUNNEL
EXCAVATION

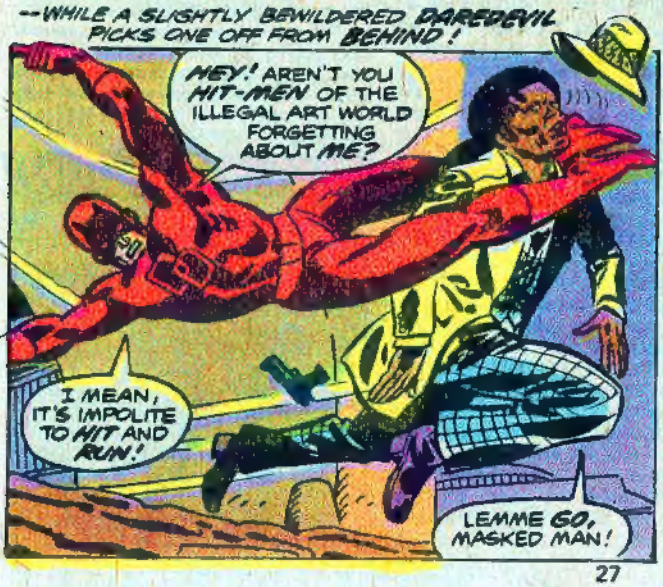

BUT, ASSS COPPERHEAD, WYLIE DARED NOT DENY ME THE MONEY I NEEDED TO CARRY OUT MY PLANSSS!
KLIK!
HE BECAME THE HENCHMAN AND, WHEN HISSS USSSEFULNESSS WASSS OVER--I KILLED HIM--*
--ASSS I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!
CHESSSNEY WASSS THE MAD ANTITHESSSISSS OF CRIME--BUT I AM CRIME INCARNATE!
* LAST ISH. --ARCHIE.


I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU HARM THESE KIDS, COPPERHEAD!
I DON'T BELIEVE IN VIOLENCE, BUT...


HSST
BUT IT IS BETTER THAN DYING, EH, SEÑOR FLY?
WHO--?!
THE WHITE TIGER!

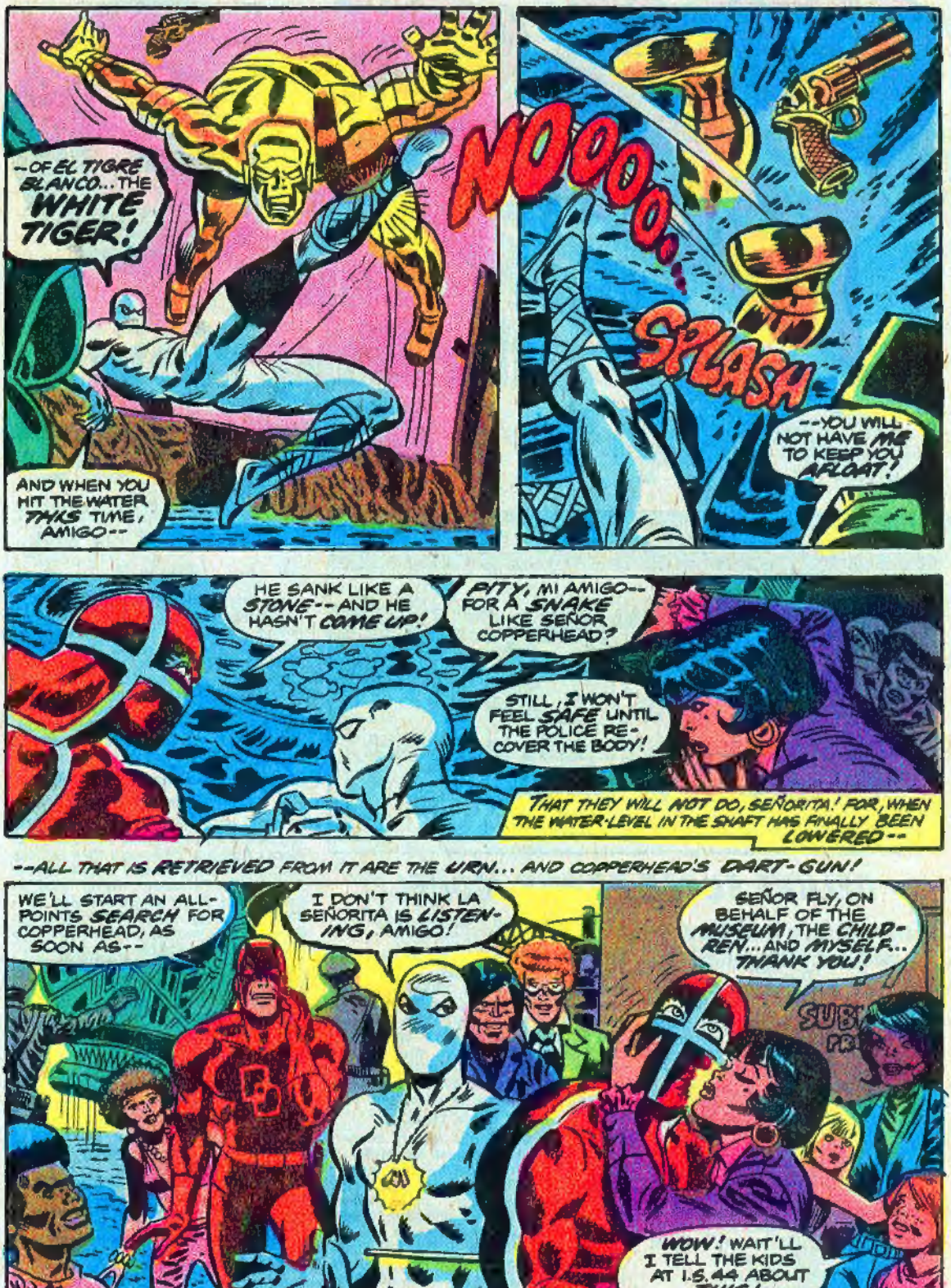
YOU CANNOT, FOOLSSS--AND YOU WILL BE THE FIRSSST TO DIE--
--AT THE HANDSSS OF COPPERHEAD!
UNGHH!
WHAP
M-MADRE DE DIOS--MY WRIST! HE--HE'S CRUSHING IT!




--WHILE A SLIGHTLY BEWILDERED DAREDEVIL PICKS ONE OFF FROM BEHIND!
HEY! AREN'T YOU HIT-MEN OF THE ILLEGAL ART WORLD FORGETTING ABOUT ME?
I MEAN, IT'S IMPOLITE TO HIT AND RUN!
LEMME GO, MASKED MAN!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

COPPERHEAD? HIS GHOST, MAYBE!
BUT DEAD OR ALIVE, HE'S ONE OF THE DEADLIEST FOES I'VE EVER FACED!
I'VE GOT TO REACH THAT SHAFT!
YOU--YOU CAN'T SHOOT THESE CHILDREN! YOU CAN'T!
THEY CAN IDENTIFY ME TO THE POLICE, WOMAN--ROB ME OF MY WEALTH!
I HAVE NO SSSCRUPLESSS ABOUT KILLING THEM! MERCY ISSS UNKNOWN TO ME!
THAT'S TOO BAD, BUSTER, 'CAUSE BAD AS WE ARE, WE AIN'T KID-KILLERS LIKE YOU!
WHO--?!
JUST THE MUGS YOU CUT IN ON THIS-- TO HELP YOU TRANSPORT THE URN!
YEH! BUT WE AIN'T GONNA STAND BY..
--AN' LET YOU PLUG A BUNCHA INNOCENT SCHOOL KIDS!
YOU WILL DO ASSS I COM-MAND-- OR YOU WILL DIE WITH THE REESST!
POW PTOW
LOOK OUT FOR HIS GUN, BOYS!
COPPERHEAD'S OFF BALANCE! I'M GROGGY-- BUT IF I CAN HIT HIM WHILE HE'S AT THE EDGE OF THE SHAFT...
WOK
WHAT--?! I'M FALLING!
SI, SEÑOR! RIGHT INTO THE WAITING REACH--


--OF EL TIGRE BLANCO... THE WHITE TIGER!
AND WHEN YOU HIT THE WATER THIS TIME, AMIGO--
NOOOO...
SPLASH
--YOU WILL NOT HAVE ME TO KEEP YOU AFLOAT!
HE SANK LIKE A STONE--AND HE HASN'T COME UP!
PITY, MI AMIGO--FOR A SNAKE LIKE SEÑOR COPPERHEAD?
STILL, I WON'T FEEL SAFE UNTIL THE POLICE RECOVER THE BODY!
THAT THEY WILL NOT DO, SEÑORITA! FOR, WHEN THE WATER-LEVEL IN THE SHAFT HAS FINALLY BEEN LOWERED--
--ALL THAT IS RETRIEVED FROM IT ARE THE URN... AND COPPERHEAD'S DART-GUN!
WE'LL START AN ALL-POINTS SEARCH FOR COPPERHEAD, AS SOON AS--
I DON'T THINK LA SEÑORITA IS LISTENING, AMIGO!
SEÑOR FLY, ON BEHALF OF THE MUSEUM, THE CHILDREN... AND MYSELF... THANK YOU!
WOW! WAIT'LL I TELL THE KIDS AT I.S.44 ABOUT THIS!

NEXT ISSUE: VIOLENCE IN THE COALFIELDS WHERE... **IT'S DARK AS A DUNGEON DOWN IN THE MINES!**

FLY PAPERS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

Dear Marvel,

HUMAN FLY #6 was entertaining, suspenseful, and one of the best comics I've ever read. The Human Fly is *not* a crime-fighter, although it is good to have him work in that aspect once in awhile (as you had him do this ish), but don't let it get out of hand. To ruin the best comic mag around today just wouldn't be right. By the way, if there is any way I can subscribe to this Magnificent Marvel Miracle Mag, I'd like to know. If it is possible, please print this letter so that other FLY-fans won't have to worry about missing the HUMAN FLY on the stands.

Steve Peters
4213 Goodland Avenue
Studio City, CA 91604

Of course you can subscribe. Just check the indicia on page one, pal. Another Mighty Marvel announcement that should be coming your way real soon, will be the formation of a HUMAN FLY FAN CLUB! Yep, that's right! The FLY himself will be giving you more info on that, so keep scanning the pages of this, and *every* Marvel mag. As for a major development in both the Fly's career, and this mag, be sure to be here next ish. That's all we can say for now.

Hey Arch, Bill, Rod,

Mr. Frank (Michelangelo) Robbins did a fairly wonderful job on the HUMAN FLY #6. Issues #1 and 2 were flawless, but #3 and 4 were questionable. What's going on? The Human Fly isn't a super-hero, he's a dare-devil! It's a great comic, but please keep off the super-hero concept. No matter *what* you do with the Fly, though, he'll still be as *real* as ever! Thanks again for the best 17-page comic book thriller ever. . .and keep it up!

Alan Snider
8958 Buena Vista
Burnaby, B.C., Canada

Dear Bill,

"Credulity is the man's weakness, but the child's strength."
—Charles Lamb, 1801

Last time around, I gave HUMAN FLY #5 a rather scathing review. My main objections were, I recall, a lack of benefits which a continued story can bring, a "Saturday morning" cartoon quality of the book, and an underdeveloped supporting cast. Well, I'm now clutching a just-read copy of HF #6, and here's the scoop:

Firstly, the supporting cast was virtually ignored. The only insight we get into any of them was Harmony's chewing out by her bad-guy boss, Carl Braden. She's the closest thing we've had, since HF #1, to a three-dimensional supporting character. The conflict with her is now established; she really is convinced that the Fly is legit, but, due to her former commitment to expose him, she must continue to bad-mouth him. I like this angle. But here is where the single-story format practically negates effective use of it. Perhaps next issue, maybe the one after that, we'll get another four panels to delve into her personality. The situation is even worse with Blaze and Ted. Such interesting (potentially, at least) characters serve mechanical functions, or decoration. I realize, Bill, that this is mostly beyond your control since these evils stem from the "cramophobia" imposed by the format. The main action of the book, indeed, 90% of it, is taken up by "the chase," and therefore all else suffers. This is really a pity, and I'd like to see the situation changed since I know you could do so much more with this book.

This is certainly not to say that HF #6 was all bad. Far from it. On the whole, I found it much more credible than the preceding ish. Instead of a murkily-motivated revenge plot, we have a couple of likeable, small-time hoods (obsessed with the "Maltese Falcon", no less) who have a penchant for murdering people, running a stolen car ring catering to South American dictatorships beneath an amusement park. Now, if *that* isn't credible, I don't know what *is*! Well, at least imaginative, not strained, and just plain fun! This is where the "Saturday morning-ness" of the book is greatly reduced—a lack of cliches, introduction of unique locales and innovative dialogue as contrasted to morning-medias bland pablum for pre-teens. I did feel that elements of the latter were in evidence in HF #5. But, with the enjoyable, humorous and exciting storyline this time 'round, those elements vanished. It wasn't possessed of a single, annoying cliche, and those it did have (the archetype of the niftily-dressed mobster, his dim-witted henchmen, etc.) were treated refreshingly light-handedly. The trouble with HF #5, I think, is that the cornball plot was taking itself much, much too seriously! Ya gotta stay *loose* on this strip, Bill.

A good point is the Fly's disavowal of super-heroism. He states to himself, "I'm no crime-fighter! I've got to notify the police!" Or, as on the last page, when he tells the kids, "Anyone could have done what I did—with the proper training!" I liked those touches. The Fly *isn't* a crime-stopper, but a stunt-performer. It will be rather hard to keep him out of scrapes with bad guys, but, if you can somehow manage it, I say great!

Keeping the Fly's identity a secret is a necessity, I suppose. But I feel that a little something more should be known about him—clues, hints, red herrings, etc. Keep him enigmatic, but not a total stranger.

Well, it's about 2 AM and I've gotta sign off. I'll be waiting for HF #7, though, in order to pass judgement and dispense with praise where it's due. I read somewhere that the HUMAN FLY is going bi-monthly—but more on that next time. S'long, Boisterous!

Commander Quotey (and his lost Marvel Madmen)
1500 LaSalle Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Whew! All we can do is sit back and *consider* all that you've said for the nonce, CQ—but, as for your last comment, as far as we at the Bullpen know, the HUMAN FLY will be buzzing your way every thirty days—monthly—without change! Don't let 'em scare ya with *rumors*, son!

Dear Bill,

What can I say? Frank Robbins' art is so alive, so action-packed, and your writing is so tight, full of caring and sensitivity, that. . .WOW!

Please keep this team together, and keep the Fly a living, breathing character!

Tom Hall
4817 N. Cedar
Spokane, WA 99208

The latter, we think, will take care of itself, Tom. As for the Mantlo-Robbins team, they'll be doing the HUMAN FLY together only on a semi-regular basis, with Lee Elias scheduled as the book's main artist in between. However, you can catch Bill and Frank's collaboration every month in Marvel's new, smash-hit. . .MAN FROM ATLANTIS! That's a plug, fella. . .but we don't think you'll be sorry if ya pick up on it!